

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer~~A sample dispensing apparatus~~

comprising:

analyzing means for analyzing a sample;

a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head
having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

rails, said sample probes being mounted to move along said rails;

said sample probes that move moving along said rails from a sample ~~sucking~~
suction position to a sample discharge position; and

a plurality of reaction cuvettes into which samples are dispensed by said
sample probes and in which a reaction takes place followed by analysis with said analyzing
means;

a controller for controlling said sample probes to reciprocally move between
said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent
said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned
at said sample suction position being discharged into a reaction cuvette that is moved and
positioned at said sample discharge position using said plurality of sample probes,

wherein said rails make a closed loop including said sample suction position and said sample discharge position;

each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position, and

a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths.

10. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer ~~A sample dispensing apparatus~~ according to claim 9, wherein said closed loop has substantially an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample probe.

11. – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer ~~A sample dispensing apparatus~~ according to claim 9, wherein said controller stops use of any of said sample probes and controls carrying out sampling by another one of said sampling probes.

14. Canceled

15. (Currently Amended) An analyzing method for an automatic analyzer ~~A sample dispensing method for an analyzing apparatus~~ comprising the steps of:

dispensing samples from a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

mounting said sample probes to ~~rails and moving said sample probes~~move along ~~said rails~~ from a position for ~~suctioning~~suction of a sample to a sample dispensing~~discharge~~ position; and

controlling said sample probes to move reciprocally between said sample suction position and said sample ~~discharge~~dispensing position alternately so as to prevent said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned at said sample suction position being discharged into one of a plurality of a reaction cuvettes, in which a reaction is to take place that is moved and positioned at said sample ~~discharge~~dispensing position, using said plurality of sample probes, and

analyzing samples discharged into said reaction cuvettes with a detector; and

wherein said movement of said sample probes makes a closed loop including said sample suction position and said sample discharge position;

each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharging position, and

a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths.

16. (Currently Amended) An analyzing ~~A sample dispensing~~ method according to claim 15, including moving said sample probes in said closed loop along a path

that is substantially of an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample nozzle.

17. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) An analyzing ~~A sample dispensing~~ method according to claim 15, wherein said controlling includes a stopping operation with one said nozzle and carrying out sampling by another said nozzle.

20. (New) An automatic analyzer comprising:
analyzing means for analyzing a sample;
a plurality of sample containers each containing a sample to be analyzed;
a sample container conveying means for conveying said plurality of sample containers;
a plurality of reaction cuvettes for mixing a reagent and a sample to be analyzed;
conveying means for conveying said plurality of reaction cuvettes;
a sample dispensing means for sucking a sample in said sample container and for discharging the sucked sample into one said reaction cuvette; and
a controller connected to said analyzing means; sample containers conveying means, said reaction cuvettes conveying means, and said sample dispensing means to control

said analyzing means, said sample containers conveying means, said reaction cuvettes conveying means, and said sample dispensing means,

wherein said sample dispensing means includes a plurality of dispensing mechanisms each having a nozzle sucking and discharging samples, said dispensing mechanisms move between said sample container and said reaction cuvette independently with each other for alternately dispensing a sample from the same sample container into a reaction cuvette, and

at least one of said sample dispensing means includes a nozzle clogging detecting means detecting clogging of a nozzle of one said sample dispensing mechanism, said controller controlling sample dispensing operations of other sample dispensing means on the basis of the information regarding clogging of said nozzle of said one sample dispensing mechanism,

wherein when said controller judges clogging of a nozzle sucking a sample from one said sample container by said one sample dispensing mechanism on the basis of said information, said controller stops another said sample dispensing means from sucking a sample from said one sample container.

21. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 20, wherein said controller further changes from one said sample container receiving a sample from which a sample is to be sucked to another said sample container that is different from said one sample container, and controls said another said sample dispensing means to suck a sample from said another sample container.

22. (New) An automatic analyzer according to claim 20, wherein when said controller judges clogging of a nozzle sucking a sample from said one sample container by said sample dispensing mechanism on the basis of said information, said controller controls the sample dispensing means to wash the flow passage of said nozzle.